



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Fort Mason Bldg. 201
San Francisco, California 94123

IN REPLY REFER TO:
L30 (GOGA-SUPT)

December 12, 2013

Members of the Board of Directors
Presidio Trust
Building 103, Presidio of San Francisco
San Francisco, California 94129

Dear Trust Board Members:

We are proud to partner with the Presidio Trust in management of the lands, stories, and themes that comprise the Presidio. We have been pleased that the Presidio Trust has looked to the National Park Service for advice on the future use of the Commissary site. Because this site is located in a uniquely central position – precisely at the connection point between the NPS-managed lands of Crissy Field, and the Trust-managed Main Post – our interest in the right choice for the Commissary is very strong.

We appreciate that the Trust Board has at least temporarily delayed reaching a decision on the future use of the Commissary site. However, we must again express our strong recommendation, echoed by many others, that the Trust defer any decision for several years to allow the site to develop in a more comprehensive, thoughtful, integrated, and planned manner.

As we conveyed in our September 23, 2013 letter, the national landmark designation of the Presidio – and especially this site – deserves a use that relates to the Presidio's mission and values and that fits seamlessly within the surrounding parklands. The proper stewardship of the Presidio merits taking a long view. The Presidio Trust should not rush a decision of this importance, especially if there is a lack of public consensus and if obvious controversy exists. With the many improvements already approved and planned, such as the new tunnel top parklands and the Presidio visitor center, there is wisdom in allowing these new uses to settle in before selecting a major new use and tenant for the Commissary site.

In our earlier letter we outlined what we believe are critical questions that should be addressed by the project proponents. The key questions related to programmatic and architectural fit. They were framed to insure that any future use of the site would enhance its national park values, become part of a carefully crafted continuity of programs that illuminate the Presidio's cultural and natural themes, and respect important design guidelines and standards.

We are aware that the Trust has raised serious issues regarding the architectural design and scale of the proposed Lucas Cultural Arts Museum. But architecture aside, we have serious concerns about the programmatic fit of the Lucas proposal – something that is of paramount importance to us.

From the information that has been presented to the public to date, we believe the program of the proposed Lucas Cultural Arts Museum has no genuine or substantive connection to the themes or programs of Crissy Field or the Main Post, or to other Presidio-connected themes that extend far beyond the boundaries of the post. While the programs of the proposed museum seem interesting, the museum's offerings could be located anywhere; therefore, the museum does not merit one of the most important sites in the entire Presidio. The Trust's own "Request for Proposal" spoke to the "Power of Place" as a primary theme: the Lucas proposal has no concrete reference to or interpretation of the Presidio.

As you know, we have been working hard – together – to provide a cohesive visitor experience from the future Heritage Center on the south end of the Main Post to Crissy Field and its array of recreational activities and the acclaimed youth and family programs of the Crissy Field Center. We feel that only a use that enhances the opportunity to build the thematic and programmatic connections that NPS and the Trust have been working closely together for years to achieve should be selected for the site.

We offer these additional comments out of a desire to make certain the decision of the Trust Board is clearly informed by the perspective of the Trust's primary partner at the Presidio, the National Park Service. To reiterate a point from our September letter, we commend the Trust for the openness of the very public process you have employed in reaching this very challenging decision. We request that you continue this openness throughout the rest of the process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank Dean". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Frank Dean
General Superintendent